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ISRAELI, PALESTINIAN AID GROUPS JOIN RED CROSS, RED CRESCENT

“Red Crystal” added to Red Cross, Red Crescent as humanitarian symbol

By Elizabeth Farabee
Washington File Special Correspondent

Geneva -- The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement voted June 22 to incorporate the Red Crystal as an additional emblem for the organization and to admit both the Israeli national society, Magen David Adom (MDA), and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society as members.

The decision by the 29th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent came in the early hours June 22 at the end of a two-day conference during which the outcome often seemed uncertain.

“It has been a major goal of the United States to achieve the universality which today allowed both societies to join the movement,” said John Bellinger, legal adviser at the State Department, who headed the U.S. delegation.

“With this decision, two humanitarian societies that serve people in a very afflicted region will be able to count on the full support of the movement as they fulfill their mission to serve those in need,” he said.

The conference voted to amend the statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to incorporate an additional protective emblem, the Red

Crystal giving it equal status to the Red Cross and Red Crescent. It also recognized the Israeli national society, Magen David Adom, and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society as national societies and full participants in the movement.

The new emblem known as the “Red Crystal” is a red square standing on one corner, against a white background inside of which may be placed the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, a combination of the two, or the Israeli Red Shield of David. The crystal, which also can be used alone, is meant to provide a neutral emblem without religious, cultural or political connotations.

The American Red Cross for many years has considered the inclusion of Israel’s MDA in the movement a policy priority and since 2000 has withheld \$45 million in accumulated dues from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to protest Israel’s exclusion.

Following the June 22 decision, the American Red Cross announced its intention of paying back in full the dues owed. After the successful vote, it made an initial payment of approximately \$24 million to the federation.

“We are extremely pleased that a wrong has been made right and that the MDA is now an equal partner with the 184 other National Societies that comprise the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement,” said Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, American Red Cross chairman. “MDA is a world-class emergency response organization and has a great deal of expertise to offer other national societies.”

Although organizers of the event hoped an agreement could be reached by consensus, in the end, a vote decided the outcome of the conference. The resolution, which approved the adoption of the crystal and allowed for the inclusion of the Palestinian and Israeli national societies in the international movement, passed with an overwhelming majority of 237 to 54.

BUSH URGES ALL NATIONS TO HALT ILLICIT WMD PROLIFERATION TRADE

Proliferation Security Initiative supporters meet in Warsaw to expand on success

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – President Bush welcomed new supporters of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), including those in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, as 60 PSI partners gathered in Warsaw for a high-level political meeting hosted by Poland.

“I join President Lech Kaczynski in welcoming PSI supporters,” Bush said in a June 23 White House statement, commending all attendees for their readiness to deny terrorist and rogue states access to weapons of mass destruction and related materials.

He urged “all responsible states to join this global effort to end the WMD proliferation trade.”

Since PSI was launched in Krakow in 2003, the initiative has expanded “from a handful of nations to a global partnership of more than 70 countries from all around the world,” the president said.

“Together, we are working to disrupt the financial activities of networks that support proliferation, as called for in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1540 and 1673,” Bush said.

“Together, we are shutting down front companies and proliferation networks and interdicting cargo carrying these dangerous materials, whether transported by land, air or sea,” the President said.

PSI supporters are in Warsaw to network and identify ways to further enhance their ability to counter WMD proliferation, he added.

POLISH FOREIGN MINISTER HIGHLIGHTS PSI SUCCESS

Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Anna Fotyga welcomed the attendees, saying that WMD proliferation calls for “decisive and consistent international action.”

She said there is good reason for satisfaction with the initiative’s accomplishments since a meeting in Krakow

two years ago to commemorate the first anniversary of PSI. The network of participating PSI nations “is steadily expanding across the globe,” the Polish foreign minister said. “They now come from every region of the world,” Fotyga said, “and, most importantly, from the regions of greatest concern for WMD-related trafficking.”

The national legal instruments and military and law enforcement capabilities of individual PSI nations have enabled successful interdictions to occur, the foreign minister said. Since 2003, “PSI participants have greatly improved their abilities to interdict suspected shipments”, according to Fotyga.

The 60 nations gathered in Poland represent every continent, different political persuasions and economic systems, and varying cultures and religions. Their willingness to unite and work together on this particular issue, Fotyga said, “is a strong signal to any potential proliferator.”

The meeting’s agenda includes strategizing to increase the number of PSI supporters and planning additional outreach activities. Participants will review lessons learned from past PSI exercises and review the calendar of upcoming events.

Fotyga said participants would discuss PSI-related legal and financial issues and look at ways to develop closer ties with the international business community as a way of ensuring the long-term success of the initiative.

AEI NOTES PSI’S FLEXIBILITY, VOLUNTARY NATURE

The Washington-based American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research issued a report in January describing PSI as noteworthy because “it has matched the global threat of proliferation with a truly global coalition.” The report’s authors, Thomas Donnelly and Vance Serchuk, write that instead of cleaving transatlantic and transpacific relations into separate spheres, PSI encompasses both Asian maritime powers like Japan and Australia and European nations such as the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom.

The flexibility of the initiative is reflected in its voluntary nature. Donnelly and Serchuk point to the various ways nations can participate -- ranging from sharing information to hosting meetings to participating in interdiction training. As an activity, PSI allows nations to do as much or as little as they choose.

The AEI report, “Transforming America’s Alliances,” states that PSI “is important in its application and interpretation of international law.” Its authors write that, rather than create a new elaborate legal architecture, the initiative builds upon “existing treaties, controls, and regimes against WMD proliferation that are currently being circumvented and violated.”

PSI’s most visible success to date has been its interdiction of the BBC China in October 2003. The freighter was intercepted en route to Libya with parts for uranium enrichment centrifuges onboard. This development has been credited with leading to the rollup of the A.Q. Khan nuclear network and to Libya’s decision to ultimately abandon its WMD programs.

For more information, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation:

http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html

WEAPONS PROLIFERATION INITIATIVE SEEKING MORE PARTNERS

State’s Joseph calls for more Asia, African, Latin support for the initiative

By Jacquelyne S. Porth
Washington File Staff Writer

Turkish and U.S. Navy commandos board a ship in a military exercise on the Mediterranean Sea. (© AP/WWP) Washington – While more than 70 countries currently support the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), it needs additional partners from Asia, Africa and Latin America, says the State Department leading arms control official.

Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Robert Joseph told representatives of 66 PSI supporting nations attending a key meeting in Warsaw, Poland, June 23, that the three-year-old initiative is “a standard of good nonproliferation behavior.” He also said it is a “vital component in the fight against the proliferation” of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

Joseph gave a positive assessment of the progress of the initiative first proposed by President Bush in Krakow,

Poland, in 2003. "We are here because we understand the need to defeat the WMD [weapons of mass destruction] threats posed by states like Iran and North Korea, terrorist groups like al-Qaida, and the facilitators willing to buy and sell sensitive technology for these states and groups," he said.

Joseph said the Warsaw meeting afforded PSI participants the opportunity to take stock of the initiative's rapid development as well as a chance "to reinforce the strong message of deterrence to proliferators." The initiative was conceived as a series of ongoing, voluntary activities and not as a membership organization. With that in mind, governments have participated in PSI in various ways and have undertaken varying levels of constructive engagement, Joseph said.

Some participating countries have taken part in the 23 air, land or maritime training exercises conducted to date, while other nations have been an integral part of actual interdictions such as the 2003 boarding of the ship BBC China, which was en route to Libya with a cargo of uranium enrichment centrifuge parts.

Joseph said that PSI participants are broadening and deepening their engagement in the initiative, contributing according to their existing capabilities and laws by "using their diplomatic, military, economic, law enforcement and intelligence tools to combat the trade in proliferation, creatively, within the context provided by a shared commitment" to the agreed on PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles.

"PSI countries have put all of these assets to work in a multinational, flexible, yet targeted fashion," he said.

NEW PSI TOOLS AND PARTNERS NEEDED

Joseph urged his audience to consider what new tools are needed "to ensure that the PSI remains a dynamic initiative." He suggested the need to deny financing to proliferators and the need to develop mechanisms to interdict payment between proliferators and their suppliers. The under secretary called on PSI supporters to do more to enlist additional partners from Asia, Africa and Latin America. He said significant amounts of global commerce travel through strategic crossroads, such as the Straits of Malacca and the Suez Canal, and major air routes crisscross the globe, thereby requiring vigilant partners who are willing to share information in a timely way to prevent illicit WMD trade, technology or expertise from reaching the wrong hands.

Much of PSI's evolution relies "on the sustained commitment and innovative efforts of each of the participating nations," Joseph said. "Maintaining readiness to respond to proliferation efforts "must be a shared objective of all PSI states," he said. "Regular participation in training exercises that test capacities and legal authorities is a positive way to maintain our operational readiness against what are creative and clever adversaries," he added. He urged participants to explore the limits of existing national legal authorities, address potential liability questions in advance and "overcome the difficulties in sustaining the political will to enforce laws proactively against states of proliferation concern."

PSI'S RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

Joseph said there is reason to be proud of PSI's record of achievements so far, pointing to around two dozen instances when the United States and PSI partners in Europe, Asia and the Middle East have prevented "transfers of equipment and materials to WMD and missile programs in countries of concern." He cited specific examples of PSI cooperation having "stopped the export to Iran's missile program of controlled equipment and dual-use goods." In one instance, he said, a PSI partner "stopped the export of heavy water-related equipment to Iran's nuclear program."

Not all of PSI's successes are discussed openly. "It is inevitable that much of our work is done quietly and with cooperation in sensitive channels outside the public spotlight," he said. "Discreet actions often help us stay one step ahead of the proliferators and give them less insight into steps they can take to evade detection," Joseph added.

The under secretary also emphasized the importance of information gathering and sharing for PSI's success. "We have learned through both our PSI successes and failures," he said, "the importance of gathering expertise from all of our relevant agencies and to integrate a wide range of operational capabilities to respond quickly and effectively to information of proliferation activity." Further, he said, the United States has heard from other partner governments, including Poland, Canada and Portugal that pursuing this initiative has similarly "helped them establish regular interagency coordination."

Joseph's parting words for PSI partners: think innovatively, enforce aggressively and engage regularly.

INDIA, U.S. AGREE TO COOPERATE ON PATENTS, COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

USTR Schwab announces expanded office for intellectual property rights

By Bruce Odessey
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States and India will work to improve Indian enforcement of copyrights, patents and other intellectual property, trade officials say.

At the June 22 conclusion of a ministers' meeting in Washington called the U.S.-India Trade Policy Forum, U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab said the two sides agreed on a number of steps to strengthen their fast-growing trade and investment relations.

"We remain committed to doubling bilateral trade over the next three years," Schwab said. "Improving the regulatory, customs and intellectual property protection climate is key."

According to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), the United States has pledged to work on strengthening India's Patent Office and Trademark Registry and building the capacity of India's judicial, customs and other agencies essential to intellectual property rights enforcement.

India agreed to consider measures for preventing disclosure of proprietary data on U.S. agricultural chemicals and pharmaceuticals, USTR said.

Meanwhile, the agency said, the United States agreed to cooperate on minimizing improper granting of patents for products based on traditional knowledge, a contentious issue between developed and developing countries in the long-stalled World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations.

In a related development, Schwab announced June 23 creation of an expanded USTR office on intellectual property rights (IPR) with its own assistant U.S. trade representative. Until now, one office handled IPR as well as investment and services issues.

"In the global economy, maintaining protections for American innovations abroad is critical to advancing U.S. competitiveness," Schwab said. "Protection of intellectual property by other nations is also critical to their

own economic development, including promotion of indigenous innovations, creativity and access to innovations by consumers and promoters of innovation."

Schwab announced also her appointment of a chief counsel for enforcement of trade commitments by China. Inadequate IPR enforcement in China long has been an irritant in U.S.-China trade relations.

Schwab made the announcements at the U.S. Congress, where members of the Senate and House of Representatives long have criticized what they view as inadequate enforcement of U.S. trade laws by the Bush administration.

The Trade Policy Forum -- the third session after one in November 2005 in New Delhi and one in February 2006 in Washington -- resulted in some other advances in U.S.-India trade, including a program for identifying investment opportunities and challenges in key infrastructure projects on both sides, including power, roads, airports and ports.

In agriculture, the two sides agreed to work out a number of health standard problems that are preventing exports of such products as Indian mangoes to the United States and U.S. almonds, fruit and wheat to India.

"The Trade Policy Forum has within a short time emerged as a very effective forum for the two sides to enhance bilateral trade and investment," said Kamal Nath, India's minister of commerce and industry. "It was encouraging to see both sides engaged in intensive discussions at the expert level on a variety of issues of mutual interest."

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